

Menopause and Pakistani Woman

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A study on 200 menopausal women was carried out in Menopause Clinic of Jinnah Hospital Lahore. The average age of menopause was 49 years. Women with high parity, early menarche and previous regular menstrual cycle had late menopause as compared to late menarche, low parity and previous irregular menstrual cycle. The study showed that 40% of menopausal women were aware about the menopausal symptoms but only 5% of women were using hormone replacement therapy.

Key words: Menopause, Pakistani woman

Menopause refers to last menstrual blood. In woman undergoing menopause around the age of 50 years, the duration of climacteric is usually 2 years.¹ The age at menopause and factors influencing it are well documented in developed countries.²

The symptoms of menopause include the neuro-endocrine (hot flushes, night sweats, insomnia, mood changes and loss of memory) lower urogenital tract symptoms (genital tract atrophy, dyspareunia and loss of libido). The other risk includes coronary heart disease, thrombosis and osteoporosis.

A study was conducted in Jinnah hospital Lahore in menopausal clinic. The aim of study was to see the average age of menopause, factors effecting the age of menopause, women awareness about menopause & hormone replacement therapy.

Materials and methods

The study was conducted at Menopause Clinic at Jinnah Hospital Lahore. 200 menopausal women were interviewed. 100 women belonging to urban area while 100 women from periurban/ rural area were included in the study. The women were attending the menopausal clinic for the well being or either with some gynaecological problems. Those women who had cessation of menstruation for at least one year were included in this study.

The questionnaire included the age of women, age of menarche, parity, menstrual cycle pattern, social status, present or past gynaecological history, medical history including hypertension, diabetes mellitus. Details regarding the symptoms of menopause and women's awareness of hormone replacement therapy. Socio-economic history, number of family members, life set up was considered.

Specific history regarding sexual history, menopausal symptoms i.e. hot flushes, night sweats, depression, insomnia, mood changes, anxiety, irritability, loss of memory and urogenital symptoms were recorded.

Examination including general physical examination, breast examination, systemic examination and pelvic examination was done.

Results

The 200 women were interviewed. These were the menopausal women with gynaecological complaints, patients attendants and hospital workers. The age of these women were between 40 to 70 years. The average age of menopause was 48 years. There was a strong relationship between age of menarche and age of menopause. The women with early age of menarche has late menopause and vice versa. Women with low parity had early menopause and high parity had late menopause.

Table: 1 Relation between parity and age at menopause

Parity	n=	Average Age
Nulliparous	20	46-48 yr.
2-5	30	45-49yr
> 5	82	48-52 yr.

Women belonging to low socio-economic class had early menopause. The common menopausal symptoms found were hot flushes, palpitations, lethargy, forgetfulness and depression.

Table: 2 Demographic relation

Factors	n=	Age at menopause
Socio-economic		
Low	140	45-49 yr.
High	60	48-53 yr.
Regional distribution		
Rural	100	44-50
Urban	100	46-53

Urogenital symptoms were common in women having menopause for the last five years. Urinary symptoms were dysuria, frequency and the stress incontinence. Out of 200 women 60 woman (30%) had urinary complaints. Out of 60 women 28 women had stress incontinence, while 52 women had complaints of frequency & urgency in 46 women. As regards to hormonal replacement therapy, only 20% of women were aware of it and 4% of women were using it. Most of the women were in believed of that menopause is a natural process and they do not want any treatment. This was mainly due to social aspects. These women do not want with drawl bleeding with hormonal

replacement therapy. Regarding their counseling for hormone replacement therapy, that fear of breast cancer & other gynecology cancer were the main concerns.

Out of 200 women 40 women was sexually active. Three women had a history of fracture. One had fracture of hip joint, while two had fracture of wrist. Five women had complaint of postmenopausal bleeding.

Table: 3. Symptoms of menopause

	n=	%age
Urogenital Symptoms	40	20
Vaginal dryness	52	36
Urinary frequency	60	30
Stress incontinence	78	39
Dysparunia	46	23
Urinary urgency		

Discussion

Menopause is due to exhaustion of the stock of ocytes in the ovary with a consequent fall in estrogen and progesterone secretions. The plasma level of principal gonadotrophins FSH and LH increases.

The average age menopause in developed countries is 51.1 years.³ Studies on the age at menopause have shown that the natural age at menopause is 4 years earlier than that observed in developed countries.⁴ In study the average age at menopause was 47 years, which is less than the age at menopause in developed countries.^{3,4} The age difference may be attributed to several factors such as age of menarche and social status. In study the women who has early menarche had late menopause. In study there was a strong relations between parity and age of menopause. The women with low parity had early menopause. Some studies have shown that the age of menarche and number of pregnancies have no obvious effect on age of menarche.⁵

In the study the women from urban are had late menopause as compared to women from rural areas. This correlates with the already published study by MacMohan and Worcester.⁶ This could be attributed to the low standard of living and education. A strong familial relation

in the menopausal age has also been shown by Torgersan.⁷ This relation was also observed in study. The menopause has also been influenced by certain drugs.⁹

The symptoms of menopause seen in study were almost the same as described by western series.^{10,11} In the study only 20% women were aware of hormone replacement therapy and 4% women were using it.

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